Statement by participants in the symposium on "Recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field"

1. Introduction[44]

Youth work aims at empowering and supporting young people in their transition from childhood to adulthood. It offers non-formal learning opportunities and equips young people with skills needed at work and in civic or private life. It provides space and opportunities for young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities, to shape their own future. However, it lacks attention and understanding of its role and of its value for an individual and for our societies.

44. Disclaimer:
All views and opinions expressed in this statement are those of the participants in the symposium on "Recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field" and, as such, do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The European Commission and the Council of Europe do not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this statement and accept no responsibility for any consequences of their use.

The symposium on "Recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/ education in the youth field" took place from 14 to 16 November 2011 at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. It was co-organised by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field, by JUGEND für Europa (the German National Agency for the Youth in Action programme) and by the SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre, in co-operation with the European Youth Forum.[45]

The symposium took place 11 years after the first symposium dedicated to non-formal learning/education in Strasbourg, and it sought to connect past, present and future developments in recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/ education in the youth field. It built on the working paper "Pathways 2.0 – towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe" (the Pathways paper), published by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth in early 2011. It describes the current state of play as regards recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/ education in the youth field, and its development in Europe over the last decade. Recognition of non-formal learning/education in the youth field plays an increasingly prominent role, both with regard to policy development and in practical terms.

The growing recognition process was accompanied by a number of key activities and events that contributed to creating common ground among the key players.[46] A range of recognition instruments for non-formal and informal learning have also been developed at local, regional, national and European level as well as in different sectors of the youth field.[47]

The Pathways paper highlights the characteristics and impacts of non-formal learning/education in the youth field and outlines 10 elements for a renewed strategy.

We, more than 100 participants of the symposium, coming from 35 countries, discussed challenges regarding recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field and proposed recommendations and ideas for further action, outlined in this Statement and the accompanying Plan of Action. The Statement is addressed to the European institutions, to the ministries responsible for youth and to other ministries concerned with the topic of recognition in the member states of the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as to other structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local level. Secondly, and with equal importance, it is addressed to youth organisations, youth work practitioners and young people themselves. Thirdly, the Statement addresses all other stakeholders – mainly education providers, employers and social partners, the academic and research community and our partners in civil society.

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45. The symposium was prepared by the ad-hoc European Expert Group on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education consisting of representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Steering Committee for Youth in the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, the National Agencies and the SALTO Resource Centres of the Youth in Action programme, and the Pool of European Youth Researchers.

46. First Pathways paper 2004, the conferences on "Bridges for recognition" in 2005 in Leuven and "Continuing the pathway towards recognition" in 2008 in Prague, the 1st European Youth Work Convention in 2010 in Ghent.

47. Most prominent are the tools existing today at European level: the Council of Europe's Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, and Youthpass, the recognition tool for the European Union's Youth in Action programme.

2. Challenges

While evident progress has been made since recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field has been on the political agenda, many challenges remain. The symposium identified the following key challenges:

2.1. The challenge of making the concept of "youth work and non-formal learning/education" better understood

Youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field are not sufficiently understood by broader society, and their concepts differ greatly between countries. The challenge is how to effectively define and communicate the added value that youth work has given to individuals and to society.

2.2. The challenge of keeping all dimensions of recognition in balance

Recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education has four dimensions: *a*. social recognition: recognition by society, valuing the positive impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education on both young people and on societies; *b*. political recognition: recognition in policies, taking the value of youth work and non-formal learning/education into account in political strategies and decisions; *c*. self-recognition: recognition by the learner, understanding his or her learning and using it in different situations and contexts; and *d*. formal recognition: recognition through tools and instruments, valuing the individual learning outcomes of a learner. All dimensions are similarly important. Depending on the context, these different dimensions of recognition need to be taken into account and developed.

2.3. The challenge of risking formalisation of non-formal learning/education

Not every activity within the scope of youth work is measurable and ought to be assessed and certified. Formal recognition of learning in youth work activities could lead to the overformalising of youth work, in other words the application of formal standards from other fields. Furthermore, youth work has many purposes and focusing, for example, "only" on the labour market or the education system can devalue the other aspects of youth work. Non-formal learning/education in the youth field is contributing to the preparation of young people for the knowledge society and civil engagement.

2.4. The challenge of assuring quality in youth work and in non-formal learning/education

Quality assurance is a prerequisite for a better recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education. The development of quality in the youth field means increased professional support to those working in the youth field on a voluntary and a professional basis (and, for example, not replacement of volunteers by paid staff). Therefore training and capacity-building measures are essential to meet quality standards in the youth field.

2.5. The challenge of maintaining and cultivating diversity

The youth field is very diverse in its approaches, aims, methodologies and structure. This diversity is a value as it allows the field to address the very diverse needs of young people in Europe. This diversity is also a challenge as we need to develop structures to work together that do not lead to a disappearance of diversity. The huge difference in support for the youth field between the different countries is a related challenge.

2.6. The challenge of building knowledge

With regard to knowledge about the youth field, several challenges need to be kept in mind. An overview of the existing knowledge on youth work needs to be maintained, and the gaps filled. Secondly, most academic or institutional research on the impact of education does not take into account the contribution of non-formal learning/education in the youth field. Moreover, research in non-formal learning/education too often focuses on learning outcomes but does not investigate the process. Lastly, it needs to be ensured that the knowledge becomes useful for practice and policy making, and that practitioners and policy makers can easily access the knowledge base.

2.7. The challenge of being dependent on other sectors

Youth work addresses many needs in society: it can be part of the educational, the social or the political system; it is part of the civil society, the third sector and leisure time which all have their own policies, structures and funding facilities. Providers of youth work have to adapt to many different and changing systems at European, national and local level, and this makes them dependent on the development of the other sectors.

2.8. The challenge of creating partnerships

The context in which youth work exists today requires that youth work establishes many partnerships with other actors from all levels, such as social and welfare organisations, sport, culture and civil society, education providers, employers, etc. It is necessary to identify the common ground for an ongoing co-operation. This challenge of co-operation and partnerships is also present within the youth field itself where many organisations feel they lack the partnerships and exchanges with other non-formal learning/education providers to work jointly on recognition.

3. Recommendations

We, the participants in the symposium, highlighted a number of recommendations corresponding to the challenges identified above and addressing the different stakeholders and areas concerned.

3.1. European-level policies

Young people all over Europe deserve quality non-formal learning/education and proper recognition of their learning. The European Union and the Council of Europe should make sure that their policies benefit all young Europeans.

Regarding the complementarity of formal, non-formal and informal learning the political process for a better recognition and validation of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field should be reinforced by a joint strategy called the "Strasbourg Process". Such a process needs to be based on a strong and sustainable political commitment to further support youth work in all its forms, including youth specific resources and infrastructure. The upcoming Council of the European Union recommendation on validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning should include a youth work and youth policy dimension and commitment from member states to follow up at national level.

Since the launch of the White Paper on Youth in 2001 there has been a strong dynamic in EU youth policy development. This dynamic should be ensured in the future as well. EU institutions and member states shall aim at close co-operation between the youth field and the area of education and training, and increase

co-operation with other stakeholders such as social partners. The current EU Youth in Action Programme needs to be continued beyond 2013 as a separate and stronger programme that, in addition to supporting youth activities, continues to contribute to the development of youth work and youth policy.

The Council of Europe should take advantage of its newly established Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation for strengthening co-operation between the sectors of education and youth and to explore new possibilities for developing non-formal learning/education and promoting its recognition. The co-management statutory bodies of the Council of Europe have a key role to play in starting and driving this process.

3.2. National, regional and local policies

To improve the overall opportunities for young people to make their learning outcomes in the youth field visible, the European debate on the further development of the recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field should be taken up and reflected at national, regional and, particularly, at local level, as these are the levels reaching out to the majority of young people. Developments at these levels, in their turn, should be transferred to the European level in order to make validation and recognition applicable and transferable.

Each strategy for better recognition of non-formal learning/education in the youth field must be based on the provision of sufficient financial support for youth work and for youth organisations, but must also focus on making outcomes visible in order to increase the social and political recognition of the sector.

3.3. Youth work

Youth organisations and other providers of youth work should make the learning that is taking place in their programmes visible. Recognition needs to start within the organisation, with every participant, and should also include youth workers. To increase trust and credibility the youth field should strongly highlight the positive outcome and impact of relevant activities both at the level of individual young people and for society itself.

Recognition is also about adapting and using tools for the identification of learning outcomes and encompasses active advocacy and participation in policy processes. As recognition is a multidimensional process it has to include stakeholders from the political and social sector as well as from the labour market.

Regarding the effectiveness of youth work, assuring quality is one of the most effective ways to give recognition a practical dimension. Thus, ensuring high-quality training and education programmes, for youth workers as well, is essential for the development of competences in youth work.

3.4. Non-formal learning/education

Based on the principle that recognition is a right and not a duty, and in order to support a holistic approach in education, non-formal learning/education has to be acknowledged as a process that gives young people a chance to develop competences that complement those acquired through formal education. Quality assurance of non-formal learning/education in the youth field is a prerequisite condition to develop effective co-operation mechanisms on an equal level with other education fields.

Non-formal learning/education should be recognised for all the competences gained and its benefit for the well-being of society and individuals, and not only for its contribution to employability and the labour market. Providers of non-formal learning/education in the youth field should be recognised for supporting and empowering disadvantaged groups, as well as for fostering civic participation through youth work and volunteering, essential to the development of society.

3.5. Knowledge building and knowledge provision

The continuing practical and theoretical development of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field is essential for strengthening its capacity and recognition. The symposium generated a common ground for a medium- and long-term co-ordinated joint strategy towards recognition of youth work and non-formal learning. It must be maintained and bring together research, policy and practice to deliver scientific and experiential knowledge. The joint strategy should map and compile existing knowledge, and identify gaps and needs for further research. The strategy should include ways of transferring the knowledge back to the providers at all levels.

3.6. Lifelong and lifewide learning

Youth work has its place within lifelong learning; thus the dialogue with the other education fields has to be reinforced. This partnership needs to be set up between providers of education and ensure learning mobility between different sectors. The lifelong learning society is being built and the youth field should take the initiative to bring together all providers of non-formal learning opportunities. No lifelong or lifewide learning policies should be developed without the involvement of non-formal learning/education providers in the youth field. The recognition tools for learning (such as the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, Youthpass and the European Skills Passport) need to be further developed in association with relevant stakeholders to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

3.7. Partnerships with other actors

A strategy to provide the employment sector with appropriate information on the potential of non-formal and informal learning in youth work is needed. This strategy ought to start by identifying the competences that are being sought in the labour market. Strengthened communication with social partners is essential for achieving understanding of the competences acquired in non-formal learning/education and of the tools used to make this learning visible. The youth field is part of both the social and the third sector. However, strategic partnerships, as well as more efficient communication channels, must be built to increase the co-operation and coherence of the youth field with the other fields of the social and third sectors.

4. Conclusions

We call on all the institutions and partners, from the local to the European level, to heed our recommendations and make them reality through policy and support programmes. We commit to work together and with our organisations to implement the recommendations and the Plan of Action.

Together with all partners we want to achieve our final and common goal: a Europe in which all young people can take part in quality youth work, where all their learning is recognised and in which all providers of non-formal learning/education and youth work get the appreciation they deserve.

Plan of Action

Introduction

Background

This Plan of Action complements the recommendations made in the Statement of the participants in the symposium on "Recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education". It identifies a number of relevant actions and measures to be launched or supported at the various levels of youth work and youth policy in Europe. This means at European, national, regional and local level, and in all infrastructures that exist in the youth field, including in youth NGOs, in public services, and in the training, research and policy communities.

The participants in the symposium entrusted the Expert Group on the recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education with editing the draft Plan of Action developed during the symposium and with publishing its final version.

The revised version of the Plan of Action

This revised version of the Plan of Action is based not only on the Plan of Action as defined by the participants of the symposium but also on the draft further developed by the Expert Group. It takes into consideration current developments, events and initiatives, as well as forthcoming ones, or proposes new actions and measures where necessary.

The seven headings, as well as the main points and sub-points under each of them, have been kept as initially defined and formulated by the participants, apart from some minor corrections of a grammatical nature. The main change is the word "education" after "learning" as in "non-formal learning/education", where it was missing. The updates or new proposals therefore consist of a series of actions and measures that can be found under each sub-point.

Actions and measures

The actions and measures which follow have been clustered under seven headings (as initially defined by the participants of the symposium):

1. Political process
2. Promotion and campaigns
3. Co-operation and partnerships
4. Knowledge
5. Quality
6. Tools
7. Resources and support

1. Political process

This section explores and supports the recommendations and priorities for recognition as identified and initiated by the European Union and the Council of Europe in their political strategies. It also highlights the role and actions to be undertaken at national levels and the need to involve all actors in the youth field.

2. Promotion and campaigns

This section tackles the understanding and the visibility of youth work and youth organisations. The actions and measures proposed relate to the importance of the promotion of the Strasbourg Process and of a number of side initiatives directly or indirectly linked to the overall recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/ education.

3. Co-operation and partnerships

This section tackles the need for the youth sector to contribute to the current challenges, mainly with regard to co-operation with employers. It also addresses the need for more dialogue in terms of needs and possibilities, and the importance of mechanisms supporting regular communication and partnerships with other stakeholders.

4. Knowledge

This section and the actions proposed focus on mapping and compiling existing knowledge in youth work and non-formal learning/education. It identifies gaps in what is known and documented and defines the fields for further research. The actions call for increased research and accumulation of knowledge. They also

explore mechanisms and networks to favour and strengthen the dissemination and use of the findings of any research and any breakthroughs in the field of youth.

5. Quality

The objectives under this section include working on a common understanding of and joint commitment to the quality of non-formal learning/education. They also cover the bringing together of all relevant stakeholders, practitioners, policy makers and researchers. This section also highlights the need to build on existing good practices in order to further promote the implementation of quality assurance in non-formal learning/education in youth work.

6. Tools

The aim of this section is to highlight the need for the further development of existing recognition instruments, based on evaluation of the results made so far and respecting the "complementarity principle". The tools should be more accessible to users and transferable to other contexts.

7. Resources and support

The actions and measures proposed in this section are particularly directed to policy makers and decision makers who are responsible for various policy fields. These fields include youth work, education and training, employment, social cohesion and civil society. This section tackles the need to provide the framework conditions, the resources and the support needed to implement the actions outlined in this document.

The use of symbols for each action

The actions under each sub-point are marked with this sign ❖ or with this sign ◆.

This sign ❖ refers to actions and measures already in process, but updated.

This sign ◆ refers to new proposals linked to forthcoming initiatives or events, or to a completely new proposal.

Follow-up

As stated at the end of the symposium, the responsibility for promoting and implementing the actions and measures cannot be delegated to any single institutional or extra-institutional body; the wider dissemination and promotion of the Statement as well as the Plan of Action and its ideas need strong support from all those involved in the youth field.

Even though the Expert Group continues to perform the tasks assigned to it (please refer to the concept paper of the Expert Group for more information), all stakeholders are invited to take further steps towards putting into practice the actions and measures hereinafter defined. They are also invited to take additional steps where necessary, contributing to the recommendations of the Statement, and to inform the Expert Group about it. This will help to keep track of the developments linked to the Plan of Action and to update the related information accordingly.

1. Political process

The political agendas of the European institutions of the Council of Europe and the European Union in the field of youth are based primarily on two documents. The first is the Final Declaration of the 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in

October 2008, "The future of the Council of Europe's youth policy: Agenda 2020", and the second is the European Union's Council resolution of November 2009 on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-18). There are also other influential documents, such as the resolution of the Council of the European Union of November 2010 on youth work. The recognition of non-formal learning/education – and of youth work in general – is an important goal for the two institutions and their partners, member states, (youth) NGOs and other non-formal learning/education providers. As highlighted in many strategic documents, youth work should be granted a better position and more political and social recognition in our societies.

Following the strategic second Pathways paper, political recognition refers to the recognition of non-formal learning/education in legislation and/or the inclusion of non-formal learning/education in political strategies, and the involvement of non-formal learning/education providers in these strategies. Social recognition refers to social players acknowledging the value of competences acquired in non-formal settings and the work done within these activities, including the value of the organisations providing this work.

The political agenda in the European Union was reinforced by the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning in December 2012. Youth organisations, youth workers, education and training providers, as well as civil society organisations, are, amongst others, identified as key stakeholders. Each of them has an important role to play in facilitating opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and any subsequent validation processes.

The report by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, entitled "Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge", recommends improving recognition of and support for new learning settings. In particular it recommends intensive efforts aimed at the recognition of youth work and of non-formal and informal learning.

The actions and measures proposed in this section are based on the recommendations and priorities for recognition as identified and initiated by the European Union and the Council of Europe in their political strategies. The Council of Europe, in co-operation with the institutions of the European Union, is invited to take the lead in the Strasbourg Process. At the national level, ministries responsible for youth and education, as well as youth organisations and other actors in the youth field, should contribute to the process and related political initiatives.

Actions and measures proposed

1.1. The most prominent action regarding political processes necessary to support the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education is the so-called Strasbourg Process. It is seen as a European-level political process, comparable to the ones that have influenced and guided strategies in education and training, such as the Bologna Process in higher education and the Bruges/Copenhagen Process in vocational education and training.[48]

> ❖ In 2014/15 the Directorate General Democracy in the Council of Europe intends to make the promotion of democratic competencies a priority under the pillar "Democratic innovation" and develop policy and practice to further quality education at all levels in formal and non-formal settings – a priority under the

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48. The proposal to launch such a process was first made in the conference on "Continuing the pathway towards recognition" held in 2008 in Prague.

pillar "Participation". Recognition of non-formal learning/education will be one of the crucial elements of the latter. The Youth Department in the Council of Europe is considering taking action to support and make the Strasbourg Process a reality, possibly in co-operation with the Education Department.

❖ For the European Union, the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education is a key issue of the EU Youth Strategy, as underlined by a Council resolution adopted in November 2010. The Irish Presidency (first half of 2013) decided to focus on quality youth work as the main theme of the presidency in the field of youth. The Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning of December 2012 is a major political document for the coming years as regards the recognition of youth work.

The design of the Strasbourg Process should be based on evidence and address the following:

1.1.1. Make the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education a priority for European co-operation in the youth field, in both the European Union and the Council of Europe.

1.1.2. Acknowledge the areas of concern that should become the political core of this process.

1.1.3. Initiate work on a legal text to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe which would include the Strasbourg Process. Member states of the Council of Europe would be invited to adopt specific measures to enhance the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field at national, regional and local level.

1.1.4. Actively support the initiative of elaborating a legal text by sharing expertise and creating links with other relevant European structures, for example: the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee and the EU Committee of the Regions.

1.1.5. Develop a joint European framework on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field.

1.1.6. Ensure compatibility of legal structures related to youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field, particularly with regard to youth worker qualifications and increased workers' mobility in the youth field.

1.1.7. Support the development of national and local policies for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

1.1.8. Ensure monitoring of the Strasbourg Process.

With regard to the Strasbourg Process, the following measures are being implemented:

❖ As highlighted above, for both European institutions (the Council of Europe and the European Commission), the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education is a priority of European co-operation in the youth field. Both institutions have initiated political processes within the limits of their responsibilities, by involving and creating links to various relevant structures and particularly by co-operating closely with their member states.

❖ As referred to above, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has passed a resolution (Resolution 1930) and a recommendation (Recommendation 2014) on "Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge". The departments for education and youth in the Council of Europe are exploring opportunities for co-operation in the implementation of the Strasbourg Process.

1.2.   In 2012, the Council of the European Union's recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning was adopted. The participants of the symposium invite the Council of the EU to include the youth field as a prominent provider of non-formal and informal learning/education environments. Furthermore, the Council recommendation should secure links to the Strasbourg Process.

❖ The Council recommendation was adopted in December 2012. It provides numerous references to the youth field and identifies youth organisations and youth workers, amongst others, as key stakeholders in facilitating opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and the subsequent validation processes.

1.3.   A chapter on youth work and non-formal learning/education should become an integral part of the EU Youth Report, to be integrated in the planned chapter on education and training.

❖ The joint EU Youth Report as adopted in September 2012 provides a substantial amount of information on initiatives in the field of education and training, including non-formal learning/education by both the European Commission and member states.

❖ The Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning invites the member states and the European Commission to report on the progress made following the adoption of the Council recommendation. This includes the future joint EU Youth Report under the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field. The next report is expected to be published in 2015.

1.4.   Forthcoming presidencies in the European Union should consider making the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education one of their priorities. Thus, recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education would also become an ongoing element of the structured dialogue with young people.

❖ Youth work is at the core of the EU Youth Strategy and a priority of the Irish Presidency in the first half of 2013, which decided to focus on issues regarding the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people. This in turn contributes to political recognition by making the value of youth work visible.

◆ Future presidencies are invited to take similar steps to address the dimension of recognition in relation to the identified priority topic. Recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education should be included as a priority topic in the structured dialogue.

2. Promotion and campaigns

Recent strategies and developments such as the renewed EU Youth Strategy, as outlined in the Council resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-18), Youth on the Move (a Europe 2020 initiative) and, more recently, Love Youth Future initiated by the European Youth Forum, all underline the importance of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe. They highlight the added value of learning mobility, youth participation, quality youth work and the value of non-formal learning/education. Visibility and a broad understanding of such concepts and principles remains a key element in the process of the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

Indeed, youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field are not sufficiently understood by broader society, and their concepts differ greatly between countries. Youth organisations and other providers of non-formal learning/education need to increase their efforts to make the learning that takes place in their activities and programmes clearer and more visible. The recognition of learning and of learning outcomes needs to start within the organisations. The role of youth organisations is also to increase social and self-recognition and to adapt and provide tools for assessment and recognition.

Taking the above into account, promotion and campaigning needs to address two main issues: understanding (knowledge) of youth work and youth organisations, and visibility (of youth work and youth organisations). The actions and measures proposed under this section relate to the importance of the promotion of not only the Strasbourg Process but also side initiatives directly or indirectly linked to the overall recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

All actors in the youth sector are invited to contribute to the implementation of actions in this area. This section particularly addresses youth organisations at all levels, including European organisations and platforms (for example, the European Youth Forum and the European Platform for Learning Mobility, etc.), the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme and the SALTO Resource Centres, policy makers, educators in formal and non-formal learning/education areas, trainers, youth workers and, of course, young people themselves. This can be achieved in particular by using social media and new information and communication technologies. Such a promotional campaign should reach all other relevant actors and be supported by the European institutions, the EU-CoE youth partnership and by national ministries responsible for youth.

Actions and measures proposed

2.1.   To raise awareness and visibility of youth work and non-formal learning/education and thus foster their social and political recognition, a European promotional campaign should be launched. The campaign could entail the following elements:

2.1.1. Launch a European Year on the Recognition of Non-Formal Learning/Education.

◆ All actors involved or related to non-formal learning/education should start lobbying for a European Year on the Recognition of Non-Formal Learning/Education, once a commonly agreed period is defined.

◆ The related consultation process may start after several events have taken place, which may lead to more concrete (and co-ordinated), initiatives at European level. These events may include the two regional symposia dedicated to recognition, which follow the Strasbourg one (in south-eastern Europe (SEE) and in eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA)), the final compilation of the action plan of the Strasbourg Process, the start of the new generation of EU programmes and the 2nd Youth Work Convention, etc.

◆ The European Year could correspond to the launch of a European promotion campaign.

2.1.2. Compile and promote narratives and experiences on the value and impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education on personal and professional pathways.

◆ Numerous studies, publications and impact surveys have been developed or are being developed on recognition, existing tools supporting recognition, quality, links to employability/entrepreneurship, links to inclusion and specific activities and/or educational approaches applied in youth work. A compilation of the studies and main findings could be done either through a common, though specific, virtual space that would be shared and made accessible to the different stakeholders, or (and) through a paper version which could support the promotion and visibility at different events. For the latter, such a document would need to continue to be a "work in progress". The format should allow for the adding of folios or appendices.

◆ Known educational concepts and findings (such as the notion of 70% and 20% of one's knowledge originating from non-formal and informal learning and 10% from formal education), highlighting the value of non-formal learning/education, should be made use of for promoting non-formal and informal learning in the youth field.

◆ Testimonials explaining the real life impact of non-formal learning/education should be collected and promoted.

2.1.3. Train youth organisations on advocacy for the recognition of non-formal learning/education and youth work at national, regional and local levels.

◆ Continuous investment and efforts in training trainers and youth workers on recognition, particularly on recognition mechanisms, should be pursued. Such training needs to tackle specific elements and principles of non-formal learning/education.

◆ Further resources that support the development of competences in this area, for example publications such as the handbook *Unlocking Doors to Recognition* by the SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre, should be promoted and made use of.

2.1.4. Organise awareness-raising events for journalists.

2.1.5. Encourage involvement of social media activists (for example bloggers, social networks, etc.).

◆ Links to forthcoming events and publications that exist, or are being developed, require disseminating. New media and social networks focusing on youth work should constantly dedicate a part of their sites and activities to promoting all forms of recognition. There is a need to train young journalists, social media activists, youth workers, youth leaders and participants, in the use of new media in their work.

◆ Involvement of active social media users would be particularly necessary as part of the campaign's structure and process.

2.1.6. The campaign could be financed by companies supporting non-formal learning/education and youth work as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes.

◆ Funding and fundraising actions should be inclusive and holistic and involve all actors active in or interested in non-formal learning/education and/or youth work. Not-for-profit, public and private sectors should combine efforts to

support such a campaign. This may require prior efforts in disseminating the added value of youth work and non-formal learning/education. There may be a need to compile publications/materials; this would include the forthcoming publication of the Statement and Plan of Action of the Strasbourg symposium. The 2nd Youth Work Convention could also be an important space to launch the promotion campaign and to start finding possible sources of funding.

2.2.   All kinds of knowledge related to youth work and non-formal learning/education, including research findings, and practical and experiential knowledge, should be appropriately communicated, promoted and disseminated, in order to bring it closer, for example, to practitioners, policy makers and social partners, etc.

2.2.1. User-friendly versions of research findings should be developed and published in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP).

2.2.2. Disseminate reports and studies on the results of non-formal learning/education to policy makers, social partners, civil society and academia.

◆ The promotion of a virtual space and its contents or a possible paper version of a compilation of findings should be widely disseminated. This needs to be made known and available to all actors and stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in and concerned with non–formal learning/education.

2.3. Better visibility, awareness and understanding of youth work and non-formal learning/education practice should be pursued, including the following proposals:

2.3.1. Implement a conference to showcase tools for non-formal learning/education.

◆ Any conference on recognition tools should build on previous processes and events such as the Strasbourg, SEE and EECA symposia, and the Youthpass evaluation event, "Youthpass in action". Such a conference could also be seen as an event preparing or relating to the 2nd Youth Work Convention (if it is organised beforehand). It could also be linked to the annual Education Week organised by the European Youth Forum. Additionally, the conference could be linked with the revision of the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers of the Council of Europe and to other parallel processes. Moreover, the sets of competences for youth workers and trainers will be redeveloped within the European Training Strategy by the end of 2013. The Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education of the European Youth Forum, etc., could also be considered.

❖ When considering conferences to showcase tools for non-formal learning/education, existing and established traditions of "tool fairs" and accompanying measures, such as the Tools for Learning strategy, should be made use of and continuously promoted.

2.3.2. Promote non-formal learning/education approaches in formal education contexts.

◆ Where existing spaces and events allow, cross-sectoral co-operation on educational practices should concentrate efforts on making the concepts and principles of non-formal learning/education known and understood. This may imply, for instance, a stronger focus on notions and concepts such as learning to learn or self-directed learning, without lessening the focus on the principles of non-formal learning/education. Such promotion should be evidence-based and build on concrete experiences and on available resources and material.

2.3.3. Promote assessment and self-assessment tools for documenting young people's competences.

◆ Several recognition tools have been developed at national and local levels both by youth organisations as well as institutions. The tools, including those developed at the European level, for example Youthpass, should be further promoted.

◆ Several self-assessment tools have been developed for the long-term training of trainers, such as ToT (Training of Trainers) and TALE (Trainers for Active Learning in Europe). These self-assessment tools are mainly tackling so-called "generic" competences of trainers but are relatively easy to adjust to other types of activities, contexts and target groups. These could be combined with or complemented by other thematic assessment tools, for example assessment of learning styles and of behavioural responses in relation to unknown situations and stress or neuroscience tools related to personality and identity, etc. With a common approach these could support the promotion of different approaches to self-assessment, of competences and learning.

3. Co-operation and partnerships

Although non-formal learning/education is important in supporting young people in the development of skills demanded in the labour market,[49] in European policy developments such educational practice and context is in most cases not considered to its full potential. This is in the context of European policy that concerns the current, mostly labour-market-related challenges for education.[50] However, there is increased co-operation in some areas. Perhaps the most prominent example of co-operation at the European level between the youth field, education and training areas, is the negotiations around the new EU programme for youth, education and sports (2014-20). However, the need for mutual co-operation has not been self-evident on all sides at all times. Despite this there have been good examples of fruitful consultations, such as the stakeholders' forums on EU co-operation in education and training, organised since 2008 by the European Civil Society Platform for Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL).

Also, with regard to co-operation between educational providers, the recommendation of the European Council on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, adopted in December 2012, has been a development area where close co-operation between the educational systems and providers is needed. During the development phase of the recommendation the involvement of the youth field was unfortunately insufficient. It is therefore even more important that the structures co-ordinating the implementation of the recommendation foresee a balanced dialogue with representatives of the youth field.

With regard to co-operation with employers, there is a demand for the youth sector to contribute to the current challenges, but so far with too little dialogue in terms of needs and possibilities. Platforms for regular communication are also missing when it comes to partnerships with other stakeholders.

In this section, partnerships with actors in fields such as social and welfare organisations, sport, culture and civil society, formal education and employment/business

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49. University of Bath/GHK Consulting (2012), *The Impact of Non-Formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability.*

50. As a recent example, the European Commission's Communication of 20 November 2012 on Rethinking education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes does not make any reference to learning contexts outside the formal education system.

are explored. The necessity for partnerships and exchanges within the youth field is also considered.

With the different stakeholders mentioned above, an agenda for exchange should be established. Platforms need to be created where information would be updated and exchanged regularly and developments mutually discussed. This would enable the second aim for this area to be reached: defining mutual ground for similar challenges and complementary solutions. While defining the mutual areas to focus on, it should also be made clear where the limits of the respective areas lie. The agenda for exchange would facilitate the evolvement of a common language that would be understandable and used by all stakeholders involved. Considering that the systems for validation of learning outcomes are developed at the national level, such exchanges should also be facilitated at national levels.

Actions and measures proposed

3.1.   Ongoing co-operation among researchers, policy makers, youth workers, social partners and other stakeholders, such as the education and training, employment and social sectors, should be facilitated in joint activities with the following aims:

3.1.1.   Ensure and reinforce co-operation within the education and training sector and an operational plan, for example through creating common tools for monitoring and evaluating the impact and efficiency of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

◆ Joint working groups gathering together diverse stakeholders should be established.

◆ As a very relevant platform concerning recognition, the Advisory Group of the EQF should systematically involve the representatives of the youth field in the discussions about the implementation of the recommendation of the EU Council on validation.

3.1.2.   Promote recognition of competences gained through youth work and non-formal learning/education by the higher education sector and support the creation of possible links between them.

◆ Joint working groups bringing together diverse stakeholders should be established.

◆ As an appropriate channel for creating the links with the higher education sector, setting up APEL (Accreditation of Prior Education and Learning) centres at national and regional levels should be considered for this action.

3.1.3.   Identify and map links between the European Qualifications Framework, the Bologna Process and recognition mechanisms for non-formal learning/education and youth work.

◆ As mentioned above, the youth field should become systematically involved in managing the implementation of the EU Council recommendation on validation.

❖ The SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre publishes regular updates about the European-wide developments concerning recognition. Such mappings could become a part of the updates document.

3.1.4. Explore links with other relevant EU policies, for example social ones, and investigate possibilities for mutual support.

◆ This should be considered as one of the main principles when establishing and implementing working groups in the cross-sectoral topics of youth work. As a good example, at the launch of a member state's peer-learning Expert Group on enhancing young people's creativity, the European Commission's policies and strategies in the neighbouring areas were presented.

3.1.5. Develop common ground for knowledge in the field of non-formal learning/education.[51]

3.1.6. Involve all the above-mentioned stakeholders in developments regarding recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

◆ Representatives of the stakeholders should be members of the working groups concerning recognition, for example the Expert Group on recognition, the Youthpass Advisory Group, and others.

◆ Platforms for regular exchange should be established.

◆ Representatives of the stakeholders should also be considered in the evaluation of youth work and policy developments.

3.2. Specific to co-operation with the employment sector, the following actions have been proposed:

3.2.1. Develop a framework for partnerships between youth organisations and companies.

3.2.2. Establish local co-operation with employers.

❖ Encourage existing good practices to be published and disseminated, for example the report on the stakeholder event "Bridges to Work", organised by the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre in 2011, which includes several examples of local and national employability and entrepreneurship projects. Another example is the project "EVS Competences for Employability" (with a focus on inclusion), which was implemented in 2013 and included a survey, national meetings and an international meeting.

3.2.3. Encourage employers to recruit young people with competences acquired (primarily) through youth work and in non-formal learning/education.

❖ There is a need to increase young people's awareness, confidence and skills to help them clearly communicate the overall benefit of their experiences in terms of the competences they have acquired in the youth field. To support this, the findings of the research study on "The impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people's employability" (commissioned by the European Youth Forum in 2012) could be used as evidence.

❖ The recognition tools developed in the youth field (especially Youthpass and the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, see section 5), pay strong attention to self-awareness in learning results and to developing the skills to reflect on learning. Such a focus should be maintained and strengthened in the future.

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51. This point also refers to the importance of making knowledge (research, policy initiatives) from different education areas easily available to the various sectors. Hence, it also refers to the section on "Knowledge".

❖ Interactions between youth organisations and employers should be supported and promoted as a means to raise awareness and bring visibility to non-formal learning/education in youth organisations. This would allow for focus on the meaning and value of youth work. Public and private employment agencies should also be part of this process as well as those in charge of stimulating youth entrepreneurship.

3.2.4. Support young people by providing them with careers guidance, help with finding a job and preparing for an interview, and with mentoring at the beginning of a job with the involvement of employers and employment agencies.

◆ The structures providing these services to young people, especially to disadvantaged young people, should be better included in youth work.

◆ Counselling and guidance should be provided to young people in order to improve their ability to relate their experience in youth organisations in recruitment processes. Youth organisations should take an active role in supporting this together with careers guidance services/advisers in schools, universities, public employment services and in employment.

3.2.5. Bring young people at risk in direct contact with the professional world through partnerships between the labour market and youth work.

◆ It is also important here to share existing good practices (see point 2.2.2).

4. Knowledge

Increased knowledge and evidence-based research is deemed essential to increase the trust and credibility of youth work and non-formal learning/education. Ongoing studies in the field of youth work and its recognition should include the following: a focus on the added value and the outcomes of youth work, and the impact of education, as well as developing and ensuring the necessary and satisfactory tools for recognition. It is a fact that most academic or institutional research on the impact of education misses out on the contribution of non-formal learning/education in the youth field. Moreover, research in non-formal learning/education too often focuses on learning outcomes but does not investigate the process. Lastly, it needs to be ensured that knowledge becomes useful for practice and policy making, and that practitioners and policy makers can easily access the knowledge base.

The actions proposed under this section focus on mapping and compiling existing knowledge in youth work and non-formal learning/education. It identifies gaps in what is known and documented and determines the fields for further research. Thus the actions call for increased research and accumulation of knowledge. The youth field needs to highlight the positive outcomes and impacts of relevant activities both at the level of individual young people and in wider society. Mechanisms and networks should be established and strengthened for the dissemination and utilisation of the findings of any research and any breakthroughs in the field of youth.

In the knowledge area many stakeholders can contribute to the implementation of actions, be it the institutions of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, with the EU-CoE youth partnership, or their respective member states (representing national, regional and local levels). The European Youth Forum, youth NGOs in general, National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme and the SALTO Resource Centres all have a relevant role to play in gathering, providing and disseminating knowledge on the subject. A prominent role needs to be given to researchers and academics dealing with youth issues and non-formal learning/

education, not least through the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy should be the central place where knowledge is gathered and made available to all.

Actions and measures proposed

4.1. Further evidence about youth work and non-formal learning/education-related issues needs to be collected. This will support the design and implementation of the Strasbourg Process, among other purposes, through the following actions:

4.1.1. Promote and fund research on youth work and on non-formal learning/education.

❖ The members of the PEYR and the correspondents to the EKCYP should work closer together. In this way they can seek ways for joint endeavours and co-operation, for example by discussing a European youth work research agenda, thus creating possibilities for cross national co-operation and comparisons.

◆ The available funding schemes for research projects of the European Commission (namely the 7th Framework Programme) should have concrete calls for research in the field of youth work. Applications by academic consortia focusing on youth work and its processes and outcomes should be especially encouraged, and a youth work and non-formal learning/education dimension should be included in ongoing and future research.

◆ A variable on the potential and impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education, including youth participation and volunteering, could be included in ongoing European research projects supported by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme, for example on economic crises or social movements.

◆ Special issues on youth work and non-formal learning/education should be edited in specific academic journals, such as the *Journal of Youth Studies* or the new series *Perspectives on Youth*.

◆ There should be increased contact between youth workers and researchers through, for example, special information notes and bulletins about the activities and priorities of youth organisations that can be shared with European universities. Visibility and awareness-raising actions at national level and the organisation of special events at European level will bring together research and youth work communities.

4.1.2. Develop a methodology for gathering data on youth work and non-formal learning/education.

❖ The existing networks of youth researchers and knowledge providers (PEYR, EKCYP) should be encouraged to start evaluating and investigating possible methods of creating, gathering and disseminating scientific European-level data collection on youth work and non-formal learning/education. This would be in addition to the work already done by the RAY Network, which focuses on the Youth in Action Programme.

◆ Different forms of youth work and non-formal learning/education should be included in data collection methods. The National Youth Councils and international and national NGOs should play an active role in ensuring that different forms of youth work are included in data created by national and European authorities.

❖ Data generated in different countries by different research projects and initiatives should be made available at European level to enable comparative analysis as well as harmonisation of data-collection methods. EKCYP and PEYR could take the lead in the process and facilitate the creation of a depository of youth work related research.

4.1.3. Call upon individual researchers to carry out projects in the field of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

❖ The research community should be made aware of the wide scope of youth work and the different experiences gained in non-formal learning/education. They should be encouraged to focus research on the impacts of other forms of learning rather than just the formal one.

4.2.   In particular, proposals for the following research tasks have been suggested:

4.2.1. Map the diversity of different youth work practices in Europe from an educational perspective.

4.2.2. Conduct studies on how to improve and further develop youth work and non-formal learning/education, and research the aspects that influence the quality and effectiveness of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field.

4.2.3. Conduct longitudinal studies in order to evaluate how youth work and non-formal learning/education influences participants' lives over longer periods (including after leaving youth work).

4.2.4. Investigate non-formal learning/education in other contexts outside youth work in order to engage in mutual exchange and identify areas of transferability and best practice.

4.2.5. Compile a map of existing recognition tools.

◆ EKCYP country reports should include a more detailed overview of existing recognition tools and practices in each country.

◆ EKCYP should commission specialised country reports on the issue of recognition, similar to the country reports of the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

◆ The *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*, published by CEDEFOP, should be updated to be more comprehensive about the field of youth work. The contribution of youth work at large should be dealt with more appropriately.

◆ The country reports of the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, published annually by CEDEFOP, should extend their analysis of non-formal learning/education and informal learning within the context of youth work, its outcomes and levels of validation.

◆ A call to the members of EKCYP and PEYR should be made to compile national data on the existing tools of recognition.

◆ There needs to be a review of existing tools of recognition being used and/or promoted by youth organisations and others and for them to be made available online.

◆ A depository of existing recognition tools should be made available, promoting best practices and serving as a possible dissemination point.

4.2.6. Conduct comparative research on the use of different recognition tools and their impact.

4.2.7. Analyse the link between youth work and non-formal learning/education and employability.

❖ In 2012 the European Youth Forum commissioned a study on "The impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people's employ-ability" by the University of Bath/GHK Consulting. The findings of the study should be widely promoted and disseminated among the youth sector, policy makers, academia and social partners.

◆ Similar studies should be conducted in different countries with specific national realities and conditions, such as the assessment of the economic value of youth work done by the National Youth Council of Ireland.

4.2.8. Make an inventory of co-operation practices between actors in the youth field and employers.

4.2.9. Conduct a study on the knowledge and perception of youth work and of non-formal learning/education among employers and the general public.

◆ A special online survey of members of employers' associations (for example through Eurochambres) should be conducted in order to assess their level of knowledge of youth work and non-formal learning/education. This would provide information on their opinions and attitudes toward youth work and non-formal learning/education and their level of recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in their employment and management strategies.

4.2.10. Review studies on the motivation of young people to take an active part in society.

◆ The European Youth Forum in co-operation with the EKCYP should start gathering together existing studies and knowledge about young people and active citizenship.

4.3. A number of proposals relate to the presentation and dissemination of research findings:

4.3.1. Make research and studies on policy and practice in youth work and non-formal learning/education more accessible in their format, distribution and language; for example, user-friendly versions of research findings uploaded to the EKCYP need to be developed.

◆ EKCYP should further develop and extend its feature on youth work and non-formal learning/education by complementing existing sub-features (his-tory of youth work, non-formal learning/education, mobility). This can be done by gathering together additional information, data and documents.

◆ A literature review of the existing research findings on youth work and non-formal learning/education should be made in different countries and brought together by a special task force.

◆ Short, user-friendly and striking policy papers on the added value and impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education based on research findings should be written and disseminated in different languages (see the example of the RAY Network policy paper on the Youth in Action Programme):

www.jugendinaktion.at/images/doku/ray_policybrief_121012.pdf

4.3.2. Ensure dissemination of research findings in different languages.

4.3.3. Produce an overview of studies on the links between employment and youth work.

5. Quality

Developing and assuring quality is a prerequisite for better recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education. It is also a prerequisite for better impact. Quality assurance should aim to contribute to the further development of youth work providers. This is achieved by consciously using it in the design of their educational programmes.

Current developments in this area include and should be inspired by the quality standards in training activities developed by the Council of Europe, as well as the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education developed by the European Youth Forum. Within the EU Youth in Action programme, the European Training Strategy focuses a lot of its work on quality issues, such as sets of competences for youth workers and trainers, and standards for international co-operation in the field of training within the National Agencies. Quality criteria have been developed, for example, as grant-award criteria for training and networking projects. In order to enhance existing work and maximise the influence and impact of such standards and/or criteria, there is a need for all relevant stakeholders to come together to show their commitment to quality assurance and support its wide implementation in the youth field.

Current objectives in this area include bringing together all relevant stakeholders, practitioners, policy makers and researchers. A common understanding of and joint commitment to the quality of non-formal learning/education needs to be supported by them all. Existing good practices should be built upon in order to further promote implementation of quality assurance in non-formal learning/education in youth work.

Youth organisations and other youth work providers are the main actors responsible for ensuring the quality of their educational practice. Yet, institutional support is crucial to ensure that quality and quality assurance of non-formal learning/education are mainstreamed throughout youth work training and capacity building. The development of quality assurance systems and tools (for example standards or labels) requires the support of the European institutions, namely the Council of Europe and the European Commission, together with their member states and their relevant structures.

Actions and measures proposed

5.1.   Quality of practices and instruments used in youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field needs to be assured.

5.1.1. Develop (minimum) standards for quality of non-formal learning/education and youth work, including quality indicators.

❖ The 1st conference of the European Platform on Learning Mobility (20-22 March 2013) tackled the development of quality standards for learning mobility projects, amongst other topics.

❖ The EU-CoE youth partnership is about to implement a test phase of the "Indicators for intercultural dialogue/learning. A guide for trainers/facilitators of non-formal education activities". The SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource

Centre has defined intercultural competence and is developing the related quality standards.

◆ The Council of Europe's quality standards in training activities should be taken as a point of reference and, if relevant, adapted to the realities of the non-formal education providers.

◆ The European Youth Forum's Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education should serve as inspiration for further developments in this direction.

◆ Elements from existing studies such as "Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work" (Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten, 2008) should be taken into account.

◆ Sets of competences for trainers and youth workers are being developed as part of the European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme. Quality criteria linked to the set of competences for trainers in the youth field need to be developed out of this.

◆ The above may require (further) space to disseminate and share existing tools and initiatives on the quality of non-formal learning/education in youth work. This will generate support and potential co-operation among actors involved in similar processes. This may also be accompanied by a possible mapping of existing tools/initiatives related to the topic of quality.

5.1.2. Agree on a charter for quality standards in non-formal learning/education and youth work in Europe.

◆ Continuous efforts need to be made to bring together different stakeholders and actors working in the field in order to ensure a stronger commitment to the quality of non-formal learning/education (what it means and the importance of it).

◆ The charter should cover as many dimensions of non-formal learning/education in youth work as possible. Even though it may be generic, the charter ought to be inclusive in terms of respecting the values and the diversity of youth work.

◆ The development of the charter needs to take into account existing practices, studies and assessments that help in identifying and supporting the key principles and elements that define quality of non-formal learning/education in youth work.

◆ The development of the charter could be proposed as one of the elements to be tackled during the forthcoming 2nd Youth Work Convention (Belgium, 2015).

5.1.3. Develop a quality label based on the quality charter.

◆ Map existing tools and practices linked to quality and the processes leading to their development (for example Intermundo's quality label for exchange projects, recognised by the Government of Switzerland, and the Council of Europe quality label for youth centres, etc.).

◆ Encourage and support organisations that want to develop their own label based on the charter.

5.1.4. Support youth organisations in developing and applying non-formal learning/ education quality assurance mechanisms in youth work.

◆ Any related information and support materials should be collected and made available in the sharing space as proposed under 4.1.1.

◆ Specific activities should be developed to support organisations (for example training on quality).

◆ The *Manual on Quality Assurance of Non-formal Education* developed by the European Youth Forum should be shared and disseminated.

◆ Participation of youth organisations in the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education of the European Youth Forum should be promoted as one of the possible learning experiences/examples.

5.1.5. Establish an Expert Group on quality assurance tools.

◆ To broaden the scope, such an Expert Group could focus on quality in general rather than the assurance tools specifically.

◆ This Expert Group will need to aim at connecting to other expert groups working on the same topic but in other fields (for example the Expert Group on quality assurance in adult education of the European Commission).

5.1.6. Establish a system for peer review for the recognition of non-formal learning/ education and youth work practices.

❖ Such a system could be seen as being linked to the supporting of youth organisations in developing and implementing quality assurance mechanisms, and/or to the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education, as developed by the European Youth Forum.

❖ Peer and mutual learning between member states is encouraged by the renewed EU Youth Strategy. This includes policy makers, practitioners, researchers and other actors.

5.1.7. Youth organisations and other relevant actors should be actively involved in the process of the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education developed by the European Youth Forum.

❖ Several youth organisations have implemented the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education in the framework of their non-formal learning/education projects or events. A series of training cycles has been organised by the European Youth Forum to this end. The European Youth Forum will continue providing opportunities for youth organisations to build their capacity in this process, including through the support of trainers and peers.

◆ In order to strengthen the political agreement on the Quality Assurance Framework, key stakeholders in the field of youth and education should co-operate in the establishment of a network. This would support the process of mainstreaming the Quality Assurance Framework for Non-Formal Education in youth organisations, as well as in other non-formal learning/ education providers.

5.1.8. Establish quality assurance for recognition tools.

◆ Based on quality aspects of youth work and the principles of non-formal learning/education, the establishment of quality principles for recognition tools should be considered (for example support of mentors/coaches).

5.1.9. Provide support to youth workers and local level youth organisations for the development of competences through reflective youth work practice and coaching.

◆ The measures related to this proposal have been mentioned under other points in this section.

5.1.10. Increase learning mobility of youth work practitioners.

❖ The future programme for youth has a strong focus on the learning mobility of youth work practitioners.

6. Tools

The actions proposed under this section invite and support further action in the developing of appropriate tools for recognition, with a particular focus on recognition tools specific to the European youth field. The European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers is a recognition instrument developed by the Council of Europe. Youthpass is the recognition instrument for the EU Youth in Action Programme, a tool of the European Commission developed in co-operation with the SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre. Currently, other new tools are being developed within the Europass framework, including a European Skills Passport (a portfolio including all other Europass documents except the CV) and the Europass Experience (a new document for recording learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning contexts).

A major development concerning the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning is that all member states are currently setting up their national qualifications frameworks and referencing their qualifications to European qualification levels. On 20 December 2012, the EU Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning was adopted. This places a greater emphasis on the positioning of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal contexts into the European and national qualifications frameworks. Member states are invited to put the relevant regulations in place by 2018.

Further information about the current state of affairs concerning European developments in recognition tools can be accessed at: www.salto-youth.net/recognition.

The aim of this section is to highlight the need for further development of existing recognition instruments, based on the evaluation of results so far and respecting the "complementarity principle". The tools should be made more accessible for users and transferable to further contexts.

Actions and measures proposed

6.1.   The following general actions have been proposed for the development and use of recognition tools in the youth field:

6.1.1. Youth work practitioners should be encouraged to document the learning outcomes of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field.

❖ Continuous efforts should be made by policy makers, institutions developing the recognition instruments and – most importantly – convinced practitioners, to raise both peer and public awareness about the benefits of reflecting on and documenting one's learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning/educational contexts.

❖ As a concrete step towards achieving better awareness, examples of good practices using the tools should be collected, published and disseminated.

❖ The results of the Youthpass impact survey (currently under implementation) need to be highlighted to demonstrate the impact of the tool for users.

❖ This aim is partly met by, for example, the Youthpass information strategy and its publications fostering understanding both of the tool, and also of recognition issues in general.

6.1.2. Recognition tools should be youth-friendly; they should be promoted online and made available in different languages.

❖ It is important to build on existing experiences with youth-specific tools when planning further developments of European level recognition tools targeted at young people (for example within the Europass framework).

❖ Here it should be noted that the recognition instruments developed at European level are in most cases multilingual, and that continuous efforts are made to enhance the availability and accessibility of the tools in this regard.

❖ One of the developmental directions of Youthpass is to enhance usage online, as well as online support for reflection.

6.1.3. Bring learning outcomes into line with a competences framework. In order to make this easier, links to existing systems of competences and particularly vocational grids/systems should be established or developed. Thus, direct links to qualifications/job profiles can be developed.

❖ The linking of competences to partial or full qualifications is addressed by the EU Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The main emphasis of the recommendation is to link the validated learning outcomes to the European and national qualifications frameworks.

6.1.4. Develop a checklist of competences that young people are likely to gain in youth work, in order to make learning outcomes more visible and assessable.

◆ Although the development of a checklist should be questioned, a mapping of competences gained in international youth work could be considered as a useful source of information and as a solid basis for further developments.

❖ As a follow-up project to the Youthpass Impact Study, an analysis of the descriptions of the learning outcomes used in Youthpass is being considered. This would provide a useful insight into the learning outcomes of the Youth in Action Programme, as described by the users of the tool.

6.1.5. Provide further possibilities for the validation and formal recognition of learning outcomes for individuals, respecting the principle of voluntary engagement.

◆ Formal education providers should ensure that the benefits of involvement in youth organisations, as well as other volunteering opportunities, are emphasised and recognised.

❖ In the EU Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (see above), member states are invited to improve the possibilities for validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning/educational contexts.

6.1.6. Promote a "learning coach" system to support self-recognition of youth work experiences as an example of good practice.

◆ This idea could be promoted as, for example, part of the work on developing quality assurance for providers of non-formal learning/education in the youth field.

◆ It is also a possible method in the further development and training of staff.

6.2.   More concretely, the existing European-level recognition tools for non-formal learning/education in the youth field should be further enhanced:

6.2.1. Coherence and complementarity of recognition tools at European level should be ensured.

❖ It is important to keep these principles in mind when further developing the tools, though respecting a target group's specific needs and aspects.

6.2.2. All existing tools, as well as those under development at the European level (for instance the Council of Europe Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, the European Union's Youthpass and European Skills Passport), must be evaluated from the users' perspective.

❖ As mentioned above, the Youthpass has been undergoing an impact survey by the European Commission, the results of which were due to be published in the spring of 2013.

6.2.3. The revision of the current European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers should be supported.

❖ The revision of the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers is planned for 2013/14. An Expert Group meeting will precede the revision process.

6.2.4. The Youthpass should be made available to everyone at all levels, also outside the Youth in Action Programme.

❖ A test phase for applying the Youthpass tool and its principles outside the framework of the Youth in Action Programme was due for implementation in 2013.

6.2.5. Stakeholders should make use of the Youthpass Impact Study carried out 2012-13.

❖ The results of the impact survey were due be published in the spring of 2013, followed by an event to highlight experiences at personal and organisational levels.

6.3.   In order to ensure that the youth work profession and learning outcomes of youth work and non-formal learning/education are adequately recognised by European-level frameworks in the field of lifelong learning developed outside the youth field, the following actions should be taken:

6.3.1. The European Commission is invited to consult the youth field when developing the European Skills Passport in order to ensure its appropriateness for youth work, while ensuring that it has a true passport nature as an easy-to-use collection of records from various fields of non-formal learning/education.

❖ The European Skills Passport was launched in December 2012. It is an online tool that enables individuals to create a portfolio of documents and attach it to the Europass CV.

6.3.2. The European Skills Passport should include attitudes developed in youth work as well as skills acquired.

❖ A new tool, the "Europass Experience" is being developed within the Europass framework. This will enable individuals to describe and record knowledge

and skills acquired through non-formal or informal learning experiences. It is foreseen that it will be launched at the end of 2013.

6.3.3. Representatives of the youth field need to be involved in the development of European and national qualifications frameworks, in order to make sure that learning results acquired in youth work become integrated into these frameworks.

6.3.4. Coherence and complementarity of recognition tools at European level should be ensured.

◆ The perspectives of the stakeholders from the youth field need to be sufficiently included in the implementation of the EU Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The recommendation explicitly calls for member states to ensure the involvement of relevant youth organisations and representatives of the voluntary sector.

◆ Systematic co-operation with stakeholders in the youth field needs to be ensured at national levels. This is for the setting up of systems within the national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) that could appropriately consider the learning outcomes from the youth field.

6.3.5. Contribute to defining youth work-related professions in the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO).

7. Resources and support

In order to ensure adequate and sufficient resources and support of youth work and non-formal learning/education, it is indispensable that European, international, national, regional and local entities provide developed infrastructure, a proper legal basis, appropriate programmes and sufficient funding. Here the European institutions including their EU-CoE youth partnership have a major role to play by offering training and capacity-building measures. Their support is envisaged to come via the European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme and the Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation and its education and training programme in the field of youth. Other actors, in particular national authorities, should also be encouraged to provide adequate support. Beneficiaries of support measures should make best use of these resources.

The actions proposed in this section are therefore particularly directed at policy makers and decision makers who are responsible for various policy fields. These include youth work, education and training, employment, social cohesion or civil society issues. They need to provide the framework conditions, the resources and the support needed to implement the actions outlined in this document. This is particularly true when it comes to the concrete funding of activities through the different programmes, such as the current Youth in Action Programme or the future Erasmus for All/Youth-Education-Sport programme, Erasmus +. It is also true for the targeted funding of projects and infrastructures, such as the National Agencies for the above-mentioned programme, the SALTO Resource Centres and the EU-CoE youth partnership. The same applies to the Council of Europe, which is closely working with youth NGOs, youth workers and youth leaders all over Europe. The Council of Europe's Youth Department aims at empowering practitioners and multipliers in the youth field and assuring quality of activities as well as fostering co-operation in the field of youth policy.

For both the Council of Europe and the European Commission the continuous support of youth NGOs and the European Youth Forum is indispensable in order to support recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

Actions and measures proposed

7.1.   To empower the practitioners in the youth field the following proposals have been made:

7.1.1.   Raise awareness and provide training to empower local actors (such as youth workers, social workers and families, etc.) in order to enable young people with fewer opportunities to get better access to youth work and non-formal learning/education. These actors should adapt recognition tools and accompany young people throughout the process of recognition in a way that is adequate to their situation.

❖ The EU-CoE youth partnership is about to implement a test phase of the "Indicators for intercultural learning. A guide for trainers/facilitators of non-formal education activities". The SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre has defined intercultural competences and is developing the related quality standards.

❖ It is important that young people with fewer opportunities continue being one of the priority target groups in the new EU youth programme, with special measures in place for facilitating their participation in the programme.

❖ The existing resources relating to the use of recognition tools with young people with fewer opportunities (such as the handbooks relating to Youthpass: *Youthpass Unfolded* and *Youthpass for All!*) should be promoted, disseminated and made use of. Translation of these resources is also encouraged.

The proposed Action 1 of the upcoming youth programme, currently entitled "Learning Mobility for Youth Workers", should be made use of for developing youth worker competences to appropriately accompany the learning of young people with fewer opportunities.

7.1.2.   Empower youth organisations to play an active role in the recognition process through:

• capacity building;

• co-operation with policy makers and other stakeholders (co-management);

• joint activities with other actors, within and outside the youth field.

❖ Sources of the European Social Fund can be used to cover the costs of the active involvement of youth experts, as happened in case of the Czech "Keys for Life" project.

◆ In terms of capacity building, representatives of youth organisations and their representative platforms should be invited to take part in respective national networks aimed at recognition (for example NQFs, etc.), as paid experts.

◆ Round tables should be jointly organised by public authorities and youth organisations, involving employers and representatives of educational institutions. If possible, a memorandum from all stakeholders should be negotiated and signed, outlining future joint steps in the field of recognition.

7.1.3.   Equip youth organisations, especially national youth councils, to contribute to the development of national qualifications frameworks.

◆ Awareness-raising is necessary among youth organisations and other youth work providers regarding the importance of being involved in this process. Related strategies and existing good practices should be shared in order to support the development of the work at national levels.

◆ There is a need to secure funding for the active involvement of experts from youth organisations in defining competence portfolios for "professions" in the field of non-formal education within projects developing national qualifications frameworks.

7.2.   For delivering good-quality youth work and contributing to its recognition, the actors in the youth field need to have sufficient and sustainable funding. This could, among other measures, be ensured through the following:

7.2.1. Secure adequate youth-specific funding in autonomous youth programmes and foundations.

❖ The European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe should continuously support youth work activities and youth organisations by providing grants to encourage co-operation among young people in Europe. In this context this is for the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation in the spirit of respect for human rights, democracy, tolerance and solidarity.

◆ The envisaged adoption of the new programme of the European Union, combining youth, education and sport under one umbrella (proposed by the European Commission under the title, "Erasmus for All", and by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union as, Youth-Education-Sport), should allow the youth field space to implement its own aims and objectives as well as to administer its own "budget line".

◆ Besides having adequate youth-specific funding in a quasi-autonomous youth programme, it is important to also look at other relevant policy fields and their funding schemes with the aim of mainstreaming youth within the next multiannual financial framework for 2014-20. This would mean that all the policies and programmes with an impact on young people should be encouraged to financially invest in young people and empower them.

7.2.2. Develop national and local policies to ensure that youth organisations have sustainable resources to deliver quality in youth work and non-formal learning/education, and to work on recognition.

❖ Quality of youth work will be best achieved by supporting youth organisations in the development of their own non-formal learning/education and youth work quality assurance frameworks. This will be further enhanced by peer-reviewing them. In order for this to work it must start at local and grassroots level while recognising that municipalities and other local and regional bodies have a key role to play.

❖ Quality of youth work can be best reached by building a strong support base for organisations, volunteers and paid staff working in youth organisations and youth services.

❖ Youth organisations increase the quality of the youth work they provide when their own needs are addressed; their core need is better recognition and a nurturing environment.

◆ Quality of youth work and quality assurance measures should be designed at all levels. It is crucial to build a common language to describe the impact and effectiveness of quality youth work, both in society and in youth organisations.

◆ Quality standards as defined, for example, in the training and education activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, should be adapted to local and regional realities.

7.2.3. Recognise in funding mechanisms at European level the contribution of volunteering as an in-kind contribution.

❖ The new Article 127 of the EU's Financial Regulation will in future allow organisations to place monetary value on the work of volunteers; this will enable them to be in a stronger position to claim volunteering as an in-kind contribution for grants, which in turn results in stronger financial support for youth organisations.